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GDYNIA-AMERICA SALVAGE DIVISION ACTIVE

RAISES SS LECH -- Slowo Polskie, No 2, 15 Jan 50

In prewar Poland, the merchant marine was not equipped for salvage operations and had to rely on the service of foreign firms, a service which was very costly in foreign exchange and not always dependable. Postwar planning provided for the formation of an efficient salvage organization to serve the ships and ports, which was organized in 1946 as a division of the Gdynia-America Line with a threefold purpose: tug service in ports, salvage service on the high seas, and raising of derelict ships.

In the beginning, the Polish crews lacked equipment, training and experience, and worked with the help of the foreign firm Svitzer. The first independent job of the salvage division was the removal of the Swedish ships Ceylon and Fana, which were grounded on the shoals, and the hauling of the Dutch ship Pro Patria from the mine fields in the Gdansk Bay.

In 1947, Polish crews raised the ship Narew, a floating dock, and the SS Otto Alfred Mueller in Szczecin; they also went to the rescue of the Norwegian ship Lilly I near Darlowo and the Swedish ship Orkan grounded near Ustka. In 1948, they began to raise the Emily with the help of Svitzer. After a certain time, Svitzer claimed that the job was impossible to complete, and withdrew. The Polish crews persisted, and the ship was raised. The first foreign order was the raising of the Norwegian SS Leda sunk in Szczecin Port during the war.

By the time the 1949 season opened, the salvage division had acquired adequate technical equipment, and the crews had gained sufficient theoretical knowledge and proficiency. Recently, they raised the tug Hercules, sunk in August 1949 in Szczecin; the Arthushof in Swinoujscie; the SS Aleksandra, and the Warszawa II, sunk during the war.

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In the last 2 years, the salvage division of the GAL completed 15 long-distance hauls from England, France, Belgium, and Holland. Their greatest success was the raising of the SS Lech, sunk by a magnetic mine in Danish waters in October 1948. Experts claim that this is the most important job done in the Baltic because of the length of the haul and the depth of the sea (17.5 meters). Although the undertaking entailed quite a risk, the Ministry of Navigation approved the plans for the work. The pontoon method widely used in the USSR was applied. The required pontoons were supplied by the Association of Polish Shipyards, and the 9-inch steel cables by the Association of Polish Wire, Nail, and Wire Products Plants.

JASTARNIA LIGHTHOUSE COMPLETED -- Dziennik Polski, No 15, 16 Jan 50

The hydrographic division in Gdynia recently activated the new lighthouse in Jastarnia, 2 months before schedule. The lighthouse, 17 meters high, with a light range of 12 nautical miles, is entirely of domestic production.

Another important investment is the mariners' signal tower on the Hel promontory.

NEW PAINT PREVENTS BARNACLES ON SHIPS -- Dziennik Polski, No 2, 3 Jan 50

Figielski, a painter in the Gdansk Shipyards, developed a new paint containing poisonous ingredients to prevent the accumulation of barnacles on ship bottoms. A test was made by painting one side of a ship with the standard paint and the other side with the special preparation. On returning from a trip, it was found that the side of the ship painted with the standard paint had accumulated the usual amount of barnacles, whereas the other side was perfectly smooth and clean.

The special paint has been submitted to the Politechnicum Laboratories in Gdansk for final approval.

MARINE RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN GDANSK -- Taegliche Rundschau, No 48, 25 Feb 50

The Baltic Institute in Gdansk, a state-endowed scientific research center, has a library containing 28,000 volumes of books, 600 manuscripts, and 412 periodicals. Its publications on navigation and economic problems have been a source of valuable information to students of the Gdansk Polytechnicum and other schools of higher learning.

The institute also controls the Marine Museum in Szczecin.

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